



**Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi**  
**Statement for the Record**  
**H.R. 3583, “American Samoa Protection of Industry, Resources and Employment Act**  
**(ASPIRE Act)**  
**Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans, and Wildlife**  
***November 4, 2009***

Thank you, Chairwoman Bordallo.

H.R. 3583, introduced by my good friend and colleague Mr. Faleomavaega, would provide a subsidy to sellers and buyers of fish delivered directly to American Samoa from vessels with United States fisheries endorsements that manufacture for the United States.

I am compelled to respectfully register my opposition to this bill, for the reasons set forth by Puerto Rico Governor Luis Fortuño in his letter to Congressman Faleomavaega, dated November 2, 2009. Like Governor Fortuño, I do not believe that H.R. 3583 is the best solution to the severe economic problems faced by American Samoa, which have recently been exacerbated by Chicken of the Sea’s decision to cease canning operations in American Samoa and by the tsunami that devastated the territory. While this bill is a well-intentioned effort to mitigate one serious problem, I am concerned that its effect could be to spawn a series of entirely new problems, both for the United States before the World Trade Organization, for the tuna industry writ large, and for the economies of other U.S. jurisdictions, including my own. With respect to this last point, I would note that Bumble Bee, which employs over 300 workers in Puerto Rico,

has argued that this legislation, if enacted, could have a serious adverse impact on its Island operations. Having met with Bumble Bee officials, I believe the company's claims about the bill's potentially negative impact on Puerto Rico to be reasonable and well-grounded, not speculative or alarmist. Jobs in Puerto Rico, like jobs in American Samoa, are American jobs—located in a U.S. territory with an unemployment rate that exceeds 16%.

I want to close by expressing this sentiment. Mr. Faleomavaega is a patriot who wants nothing more than to provide opportunities and hope for his people, whose blood—as the gentleman from American Samoa so eloquently put it—“runs red, white and blue.” I recognize that this may come as little comfort to Mr. Faleomavaega, who is—rightly—more interested in finding practical solutions to the problems confronting his constituents than he is in hearing vague expressions of amity and understanding. While I disagree that this particular bill represents the best way forward for the people of American Samoa, I do not believe it is morally acceptable for me and my colleagues in this body to simply oppose it without also making crystal clear that we will do everything within our power to help craft an alternative solution. The people of American Samoa have sacrificed a tremendous amount for this country, and we owe them nothing less than our best effort.